

Why not try ... ?

The Discipline
of the Month



No 6.

Ride to Time

- AKA 'Speed To Safety' in WA

Five reasons why your club should try Ride to Time (RTT)

1. Riding to time helps you learn to ride at speed, safely and in control of your horse.

2. This is skill that can help you get a job in the racing industry.

3. Knowing how fast you ride helps prevent time faults in showjumping and cross country.

4 You get to step inside the shoes of a trackwork rider or jockey and learn how they do it.

5. This is an activity that doesn't require a lot of equipment, it's exciting and good fun!

Ride to Time – what is it?

Ride to Time, or Speed to Safety, is learning how to ride at a certain pace, and judge how fast your horse is traveling.

Pony Club riders need to know this when competing in show jumping or eventing. If you go too slow in a showjump ring or on a cross country course, you will get time faults.

Courses will always have the time allowed printed on the map of the course (eg 450 metres per minute), or you are expected to know it because of the grade/level you are riding.

The course is always measured with a measuring wheel (right), so a 450m course, for example, has a time allowed of 60 seconds using the rate above.

Jockeys and track work riders need to know how fast they are travelling as a trainer may ask for '15 secs per furlong (200m)' in training.



The times have been set based on the cross country times for each grade, accounting for the fact there are no jumps. Riders have one practice run before attempting the competition time. Rider closest to required speed (timed) is the winner. So if you are competing and also thinking of a career in the racing industry, there's two good reasons to learn how to ride to time!



ABOVE: Edith Ashmore on Outlaw from Monmouth Riding and Pony Club in Tasmania during a 'pace riding' session. In Tasmania pace riding is used at rallies and camps to teach members how to ride to time at events.

Photo: Sarah Worsley Photography.

What distances do you ride?



Ideally you would try this at a racecourse or sports oval (with permission).

Formal Ride to Time Events are run over 1000m or one km. While just learning or trying it out, you could use a 200m straight stretch of flat ground with good footing which will give you a time you can multiply by five. While not the same as riding one km, it would give you an approximate idea.

PHOTO: Jess Grove riding Red Sambucca for Midlands Pony Club, Tasmania during a pace riding session.
Sarah Worsley Photography.

How fast do you ride?

Formal events for Ride to Time or Speed to Safety use:

120's - Horse trials Grades 3,4,5 riders must ride 1000m @ 500m per minute (120 seconds). This is called 'Maiden' Class.

109's - Horse trials Grades 1 and 2 riders must ride 1000m @ 550m per minute (109 seconds). This is called the 'Open' Class.

How fast is that? Well, on a race day a jockey might ride a 1000m race in under 60 seconds. So for Maiden class RTT, that's 'half pace'.

In formal events (VIC and WA) riders must be 12 years or over.

Right: Lucy Reid on Rolled Gold, Hobart and Districts Pony Club, Tas. during a pace riding session. (Sarah Worsley Photography)



Safety is the key motivator behind the Speed to Safety program, just as safety dominates the procedures for any Pony Club activity.

The Speed to Safety concept offers an experienced, professional level of training with the dedicated assistance of the Careers in Racing team and also highlights to the riders, career opportunities within the racing industry.

It is more than a fun day at the races. It aims to educate a generation of riders who will grasp the significance and importance of control and safety whilst introducing broader opportunities that await them within the equine and racing industries.

It is also an opportunity to merge the knowledgeable and experienced individuals of the racing industry with the enthusiasm and determination of our youth.

Requirements for training days

Minimum of 12 years of age.

Each rider must be signed off by their Club Secretary and Chief Coach as competent prior to attending training days.

Riders must hold a minimum C Certificate and/or be competing at a minimum PC/EvA80 Eventing.

At each training day, riders are timed individually, riding over 1000m (times on Page 2). Riders wear standard XC Gear, including back protector.

They do not need to be competing in eventing to take part in the Speed to Safety program but must be competent and comfortable to travel at the required speeds without assistance.

[MORE about PCAWA's Speed to Safety Program](#)

Sally Mayall

Sport Development Officer PCAWA



ABOVE: At training days, riders begin by receiving instruction on position, rein holds, and counting times using a mechanical horse if available.



How Victoria Does Ride to Time

The Pony Club Victoria Ride to Time program grows stronger every year. PAV has built a strong relationship with Racing Victoria to develop this discipline for our members.

Racing Victoria assists with not only financial support, but a link for our riders who may be interested to become a part of the racing industry in roles such as track riders, apprentice jockeys, stable hands to name a few.

Our State Final is held each August at Moonee Valley Racecourse on a race meeting day and it's a big thrill for our Pony Club riders to have that canter past racing spectators and past the winning post!

The riders dress in racing silks often in colours associated with the horse they may be riding or sometimes a family member is associated in the racing industry and the rider wears their stable colours. The event brings both equestrian organisations together and with some riders aboard a retired racehorse, it certainly shows the general community how 'off the track (OTT) racehorses can find wonderful homes and be versatile past a racing career. Of course a rider can attend riding any breed of horse!

How does it work?

The Ride to Time Program comprises of horse trials-graded riders from across the 10 PCV zones attending a series of training and education sessions where professional jockeys and/or suitably accredited instructors will assist riders with the skills required for riding at a given speed.

At the Zone training clinics, a given speed will be nominated for a time trial. Practise riding to these times is carried out for the duration of the training session on a local racetrack. After the clinic riders will be selected to represent their Zone at the Ride to Time State Championships, held at a Metropolitan race course in Melbourne. A total of 20 riders, a finalist from each Zone in each section will represent that Zone at the Metropolitan event

How does it help riders?

Riders learn the importance of riding safely, in control and to a given plan. They learn the significance and importance of control and safety whilst introducing broader opportunities that await them within the equine industry.

The program also gives riders the opportunity to ride in track pads, use beepers (metronomes) and learn track riding skills and techniques used by track riders and jockeys.

Kathleen Kindler
PCV State Coaching



ABOVE: Ride to Time finalists from each Zone get to ride off at a racecourse one by one, during a race meeting, wearing silks in front of a race day crowd. Their names even appear on the televised event.

[Watch a final here - Vimeo produced by Tim Patterson for Racing Victoria and OTT.](#)

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How Victoria does RTT

(from Page 4)

These new techniques can be transferred to a number of different equestrian riding situations such as in cross country phase of horse trials. Many of our participants comment on how their XC times improve and control improve after spending time in this program. We consider it very important in terms of offering a 'safety' program for our Pony Club Victoria riders.

Can this be done at a rally or muster?

A program such as this is also easily modified for a rally situation. Of course riders don't gain a qualifying time for entry to State Final, but in Victoria, many clubs make the most of our accredited RTT coaches and invite them to their rally so riders can practise the techniques and use the beepers (metronomes – same as those used in the new syllabus) over shorter distances. It is very popular with riders at a rally and gives them something different to the usual Olympic disciplines.

FOOTNOTE: Unfortunately this year, PCV's qualifying RTT events are on hold due to Covid-19 and the inability to access local racecourses (qualifiers are usually held between April and July each year). PCV is hopeful to still run this event in 2020.

Certificate help

Riders undertaking their C* or K certificate can also use these days to work towards having 'ride at given pace' task achieved and signed off.



[Trainers like Troy Corstens are in full support of Pony Clubs teaching their riders how to 'ride to time'.](#)



The Culmination . . .

Victorian Pony Club zone finalists, including quite a few from Ballarat Pony Club, at the OTT Thoroughbreds Ride to Time final (year unknown). Brothers Harry Grace, (standing, left) and Tom Grace (standing 4th from right) are now jockeys. A few others are also now riding trackwork for trainers.

These events in VIC and WA have the support of their state racing organisations. Top jockey Craig Williams and Victoria Racing officials are with the club members.

At the far right is Racing Victoria's Lisa Coffey, who was a PCV RTT coach co-ordinator and trainer. She now runs Lisa Coffey Education (Racing Hearts Equine Assisted Therapy). We are proud to have Lisa on the new PCA Youth Advisory Council.